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The President's Daily Brief

September 25, 1975

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LEBANON

Fighting continued in Beirut yesterday as the agreement announced by Prime Minister Karami failed to be implemented.

Our embassy in Beirut reports that, although there still is hope that Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam will achieve a settlement, time is running out. Syrian Chief of Staff Shihabi, who accompanied Khaddam to Beirut, returned to Damascus on Tuesday, and Khaddam told reporters he was returning today. Failure of the Syrian mediation effort would increase the chance for Lebanon to slide into a full-scale civil war.

Our embassy also reports that tensions in Zahlah, the scene of fighting between Muslims and Christians late last month, and in other areas are rising. Clashes also have been reported in the southern outskirts of Beirut between members of the Druze sect and Christians. There has been little involvement in the conflict thus far by the Druze, who tend to identify with the Muslims. Sustained Druze-Christian fighting could be an extremely serious complication to the situation.

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Publicly, top Israeli leaders are keeping their comments about the situation in Lebanon to a minimum in an apparent effort to avoid inflaming the situation.

Foreign Minister Allon gave the most direct expression of Tel Aviv's primary concern in a recent press interview when he warned Syria not to interpret the reluctance of the great powers to intervene in Lebanon as giving Damascus a free hand there. Israel, he said, will not intervene as long as the conflict is confined to the Lebanese themselves. Two days ago an unnamed Israeli official was quoted as telling newsmen that Tel Aviv would intervene only if it judged that its security was threatened. The official warned that Syrian intervention could lead Israel to conclude such a threat existed.

Meanwhile, hostilities along the Israel-Lebanon border are at a relatively low level. The Israeli military probably has assumed an increased state of readiness along the border [redacted] 25X1

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PORTUGAL

The Communist Party suffered the latest in a series of setbacks on Tuesday when the cabinet named 11 new secretaries of state and gave the Communists only one of the posts.

The cabinet also announced that a navy man friendly with Major Antunes has been named Prime Minister Azevedo's chief of the cabinet. It had been rumored that the post might go to the pro-Communist admiral who headed the military propaganda branch. Another announcement upsetting the Communists was the cabinet's statement that the decrees issued in the waning days of the Goncalves government now will be reexamined. The Communists had pressed for the promulgation of these decrees as testament to the new government's fidelity to the revolution.

Maneuvering by all of the political parties, meanwhile, is intensifying. The Socialists, with the help of their allies, are beginning a campaign to challenge Communist domination of the national trade union confederation. The Socialists already have registered a clean-sweep victory in the most important white-collar unions, but will have a difficult time with the blue-collar organizations.

Some strains have appeared among these parties, however. The former Popular Democratic Party leader, Sa Carneiro, made some injudicious statements against the military during his campaign to regain control of his party. His comments seem certain to antagonize the party's military supporters. Socialist leader Mario Soares also probably has antagonized some followers by commenting to the London *Times* that social democracy is not applicable in Portugal and the country needs "a complete modification of its economic structures." Soares added that the purpose of the new government program is not to correct unjust aspects of capitalism, but to destroy it. He has been soft-pedaling these views in recent months, probably to avoid antagonizing Western supporters. He now may feel that he has to demonstrate the difference between his party and the conservative Popular Democrats, who can be challenged as reactionaries by the Communists.

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Recent Soviet *missile firings into a disputed area of the Barents Sea appear to be designed to strengthen Moscow's position in bilateral negotiations with* Norway.

The Norwegians, while admitting that the impact area is in international waters, have expressed concern because of the danger to fishing and navigation. Both countries have claimed the impact area as part of their continental shelf in negotiations to delimit boundaries in the Barents Sea. The next round of boundary talks begins in November. The missile firings are likely to demonstrate to the Norwegians that the Soviets are apt to be inflexible on the disputed area.

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Turkey

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